

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

SAJ-01 IO-11 ACDA-05 /074 W

----- 069850

R 100838Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9480

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

FBIS OKINAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2765

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, CH, US

SUBJECT: NIXON PRC VISIT

1. DURING MARCH 10 MEETING WITH CONGENOFF'S, TA KUNG PAO EDITOR FEI I-MIN CLAIMED THAT CHINA HAD BADLY MISCALCULATED THE REACTION OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO THE CHINA TRIP BY FORMER PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON. FEI ALLEGED THAT WHEN THE FULL IMPACT OF US MEDIA CRITICISM BEGAN TO SOAK IN ON THE PRC LEADERSHIP, THEY TOOK STEPS TO LOWER SLIGHTLY THE PROTOCOL LEVEL OF THE VISIT. AS EXAMPLES, HE CITED: (A) PEKING'S LAST-MINUTE DECISION NOT TO PERMIT TELEVISION REPRESENTATIVES ACCESS TO THE DIRECT SATELLITE LING; (B) THE REVERSAL OF AN EARLIER DECISION TO PERMIT THE PRESS TO TRAVEL TO CHINA ABOARD NIXON'S AIRCRAFT; AND (C) THE SEPARATION OF NIXON AND HIS PARTY FROM THE PRESS GROUP BY UTILIZING TWO BOATS

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FOR THE CRUISE ON THE LI RIVER AT KWEILIN. FEI ALSO NOTED

HUA KUO-FENG'S TOAST AT THE RETURN BANQUET IN WHICH HE MENTIONED THAT NIXON NO LONGER HOLDS ANY PUBLIC OFFICE AND TOASTED THE HEALTH OF PRESIDENT FORD.

2. FEI REPEATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT HE PERSONALLY, AS WELL AS THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP, HAD BEEN SURPRISED AT THE VEHEMENCE OF THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THE NIXON VISIT. HE INSISTED THAT THE US REACTION REPRESENTED A MISUNDERSTANDING OF CHINESE ATTITUDE TOWARD NIXON AND THE WATERGATE AFFAIR. HE SAID THAT THE INVITATION WAS SIMPLY A DEMONSTRATION OF THE HIGH ESTEEM IN WHICH NIXON IS HELD BY THE CHINESE FOR HIS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND HAD NO IMPLICATIONS FOR DOMESTIC AMERICAN POLITICS. HE JOKINGLY CONCLUDED THAT HE WAS VERY RELIEVED TO LEARN THAT PRESIDENT FORD WAS THE VICTOR IN THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY.

3. COMMENT: FEI SEEMED GENUINELY EMBARRASSED AND RATHER APOLOGETIC ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE NIXON VISIT ON US PUBLIC OPINION. SINCE HE PRESUMABLY IS USED AS A SEMI-OFFICIAL CONDUIT FOR PRC VIEWS IN HONG KONG, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE CHINESE WANTED THIS MEA CULPA CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON.
CROSS

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